Corporation for National and Community Service

2010 Social Innovation Fund

Venture Philanthropy Partners

Reviewer Comments – Phase 1

Table of Contents

2010 Social Innovation Fund

Venture Philanthropy Partners

Section 1 – Reviewer Comments: Group 1

SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND 2010

PANEL CONSENSUS FORM

Instructions throughout this form are indicated in **red.**

Before you begin, please fill out the Applicant Name and Application ID# in the above header. This Panel Consensus Form (PCF) is where each panel records its consensus assessment of an application. The completion of this form may be led by any panelist; that individual will be designated the Lead Reviewer (LR). All Expert Reviewers are expected to serve as the LR on at least one application. The consensus assessment should be based on the panel's examination of the full application Narrative, which consists of the following 3 categories:

Category	Percentage	Subcategories
Program Design	45%	A. Goals and Objectives
		B. Use of Evidence
		C. Community Resources

		D. Description of Activities
		  i. Subgranting
		  ii. Technical Assistance and Support

Organizational Capacity	35%	A. Ability to Provide Program Oversight
		B. Ability to Provide Fiscal Oversight
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	20%	A. Budget and Program Design
		B. Match Sources

Panels will utilize Panel Consensus Calls to discuss each application and come to agreement on the content of the Narrative Assessment for each category, the Rating for each category, the Overall Appraisal Statement and the Band in which the application will be placed. When completing this form, the LR should rely on four primary documents: 1) the application being reviewed; 2) the IRW Compilation for the application being reviewed (compiled prior to discussion by the panel Facilitator); 3) the SIF Notice of Federal Funds Availability (NOFA); 4) the Consensus Rubric at the end of this form.

Please complete the following steps:

1. For each of the 3 categories (Program Design; Organizational Capacity; Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy), the LR should:
    a. **Write a 3 – 5 sentence Narrative Assessment** reflecting the panel's assessment of the quality of the response in the category being assessed; it is important that this narrative is not a summary of the application, rather the panel's evaluation of the application's quality.
    b. **List the application's significant strengths and weaknesses and annotate each.** Each significant strength or weakness **must** be supported by **at least one** of the Eligibility or Application Review Criteria that were in the SIF NOFA. (examples are included in this form)
    c. **Taking into consideration** both the Narrative Assessment and the listed strengths and weaknesses, **select a Rating** by checking the appropriate box.

2. **Complete the Overall Appraisal section.** In this section, you will:
    a. Provide an Overall Appraisal Statement; and
    b. Select a consensus Band that represents the quality of the application as a whole. The Bands are described in the Overall Appraisal section at the end of this form, and Appendix D of the Review Guide.

3. **After the panel has discussed all applications, provide a Rank for each application.**

PROGRAM DESIGN (45%)

The **Social Innovation Fund Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) states** that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Program Design.

A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Corporation asks applicants to use a thematic approach in describing their proposed investments in community organizations. As established in the Act, there are two basic operational models of SIF intermediaries. The first is a SIF that will operate in a single geographic location, and address one or more priority issues within that location. This model is referred to as a "geographically-based SIF." The second model is a SIF that will address a single priority issue area in multiple geographic locations. This model is referred to as an "issue-based SIF." The Corporation will assess whether the application properly proposes goals and objectives as either a geographically-based or an issue-based SIF.

i.   ***Geographically-Based SIF***
    To apply as a geographically-based SIF, the applicant must propose to focus on serving low-income communities within a specific local geographic area, and propose to focus on improving measurable outcomes related to <u>one or more</u> of the following priority issue areas:
    - * **Economic Opportunity** – Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals;*
    - * **Youth Development and School Support** – Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives;*
    - * **Healthy Futures** – Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness.*

    The application must provide 1) statistics on the needs related to the issue area(s) within the specific local geographic area, and 2) information on the specific measurable outcomes related to those issue areas that the applicant will seek to improve.

ii.   ***Issue-Based SIF***
    To apply as an issue-based SIF, the application must propose to focus on addressing one of the following priority issue areas within multiple low-income communities:
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    - * **Healthy Futures** – Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness.*

    The application must provide 1) statistics on the needs related to the issue area within the geographic areas likely to be served, including statistics demonstrating that those geographic

areas have a high need in the priority issue area, and 2) information on the specific measurable outcomes related to the priority issue area that the applicant will seek to improve.

B. USE OF EVIDENCE

i. *Applicants must include in their application information describing their track record of using rigorous evidence, data, and evaluation tools to:*
- *Select and invest in subgrantees;*
- *Support and monitor the replication and expansion of subgrantees; and*
- *Achieve measurable outcomes.*

C. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Not applicable. The applicant's Community Resources should be assessed in the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy section. Applicants were instructed **not** to provide information in this section. If applicants include information in this section, it should not be considered in your overall rating for the Program Design section.

D. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

i. **Subgranting**
a. *Applicants must describe the process by which they will competitively select their nonprofit community organization subgrantees, and, if applicable, the process by which they have pre-selected some subgrantees. Specifically, applicants must describe how their competitive subgrant selection process will ensure a portfolio of subgrantees that are innovative nonprofit community organizations serving low-income communities and that possess:*
- *A strong theory of change;*
- *Strong leadership and financial and management systems, including data management;*
- *A strong financial position, including funding diversity, the ability to meet the requirements for providing dollar-for-dollar matching funds, and the ability to sustain the initiative after the subgrant period concludes;*
- *Strong community relationships;*
- *A commitment to and track record of using data and evaluation for performance and program improvement;*
- *Evidence of effectiveness, including a demonstrated track record of achieving specific measurable outcomes related to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary;*
- *Strong potential for replication or expansion;*
- *A well-defined plan for achieving specific measurable outcomes connected to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary, evaluation of program effectiveness, performance improvement, and replication or expansion; and*
- *A commitment to use grant funds to replicate, expand, or support their programs.*

Either as part of its review of the applications or in clarification reviews prior to award, the Corporation may request additional information regarding pre-selected subgrantees for compliance and appropriate outcomes.

ii.   **Technical Assistance and Support**

a.   *Applicants must include in their application information describing how they will provide technical assistance and support (other than financial support) that will increase the ability of subgrantees to achieve their measurable outcomes, including replication or expansion. Replication or expansion may happen in various ways (including, for example, creating new sites or affiliating with another program to replicate an intervention) and in multiple contexts (including, for example, serving more people in a current geography or growing to new geographies).*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's PROGRAM DESIGN as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

The application is well focused, addressing a continuum of need. The program is focused on serving vulnerable low-income youth in the DC area by providing a continuum of assistance in preparing for and completing college, finding meaningful employment and engaging civic participation opportunities, and adopting healthy lifestyles. It makes excellent use of research and evaluation to improve results. The applicant maximizes results through a team approach to reduce duplication of effort. The first phase of preselecting subgrantees (College Summit, KIPP DC, Latin American Youth Center, and Year Up) was not conducted in an open and competitive manner. Although these organizations are highly qualified, the applicant didn't demonstration that the preselected subgrantees possessed unique skills that others couldn't provide or that they were the gold standard in providing these services. The applicant did not clearly establish measurable goals.

Significant Strengths

(+) The applicant is a geographically-based SIF focused on youth development and school support in the DC area. The applicant has defined a population in need – vulnerable youth, 14-24 year olds from low income families – for a wrap around approach to education and community support. *(pg 4, 5-6) (Program Design A.i.)*

(+) The applicant seeks to address more than one critical challenge concurrently by providing a continuum of needs to the target population of low income 14-24-year-olds in the National Capital Region. All subgrantees provide services to address a continuum of need of low-income youth: middle and high school education; college preparation; wrap-around support to the most "disconnected" youth; and a "reconnection" to employment and post-secondary education. *(pg 6, 7) (Program Design A.ii)*

(+) The applicant makes excellent use of research and evaluation to improve outcomes. It describes 4 levels: 1.) Subgrantees will contribute data to a common framework to measure success in education and employment for target population. 2.) VPP and Child Trends will collect data across subgrantees on other outcomes such as social behavior and civic engagement. Each subgrantee will share data in

domains where it has activities and metrics in place. Child Trends will analyze data for trends and opportunity for learning and improvement. 3.) VPP will support experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation of all subgrantee youthCONNECT projects and 4.) Child Trends (a nationally recognized research and policy expert) will conduct implementation evaluations to assess fidelity in program execution. *(pg 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16-17, 20, 23, 26) (Program Design D.i.a., ii.a.)*

(+) The applicant will establish a networked approach to social changes through a collective effort that eliminates duplication. This includes the following: use of evidence and evaluation in systematic ways; addressing more than one critical challenge concurrently; connecting approaches and cross-pollinating solutions; minimizing duplication and creating efficiencies; overcoming common challenges; and informing a public discussion and effecting broader systems change. *(pg 6-7) (Program Design D.i.a,ii.a.)*

(+) The applicant provides excellent oversight and multiple layers of controls to identify problems for course correction. The applicant has strong leadership, fiscal management, and ties to the community. (pg 4, 10, 29-33)

(+) The applicant provides technical assistance to public agencies and private organizations that develop, analyze, track, and use statistical indicators of child and youth well-being. It uses a high-engagement model of investment/grantmaking, particularly for technical assistance, including joining the Board of Directors of the subgrantee. *(pg 10, 19, 20) Program Design D.ii.a)*

Significant Weaknesses

(-) The proposed indicators of progress only partially address the two stated goals in the proposal, (1) increase education and employment outcomes for low-income youth in transition and (2) decrease the number of disconnected youth. The indicators provided do not address the employment outcome. Progress will include: (i) improved school outcomes; (ii) literacy rates; (iii) high school graduation/GED attainment; (iv) post--secondary enrollment; (v) post-secondary attendance; and (vi) attainment of postsecondary credential. Subgrantees will also report the proportion of youth who have dropped out of school to track status of disconnection. *(Program Design D.i.a)*

(-) For phase one of the subgrantee selection process, the applicant didn't conduct an open and competitive process. *(pg 19) (Program Design D.i.a)*

Select a Rating for PROGRAM DESIGN (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☐ **Excellent**　　　☐ **Strong**　　　☒ **Satisfactory**　　　☐**Weak/Non-responsive**

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (35%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA states** that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Organizational Capacity.

A. ABILITY TO PROVIDE PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

In evaluating your organization's ability to provide program oversight, the Corporation will consider:

i.   *The extent to which your organization has a sound structure including:*
- *The ability to provide sound programmatic oversight, including:*
  - o *Experience with and capacity for evaluation; and*
  - o *Experience with and capacity for supporting replication or expansion.*
- *Well-defined roles for your Board of directors, administrators, and staff;*
- *A well-designed plan and systems for organizational (as opposed to subgrantee) self-assessment and continuous improvement; and*
- *The ability to provide and/or secure effective technical assistance.*

ii.   *Whether your organization has a sound record of accomplishment, including the extent to which you:*
- *Have a track record of supporting organizations that demonstrate evidence of impact;*
- *Demonstrate leadership within the organization and strong relationships within the communities served;*
- *Have a track-record of raising substantial resources, and, if you are an existing Federal grantee, having secured the matching resources as required in your prior grant awards; and*
- *The extent to which your community support recurs, increases in scope or amount, and is more diverse, as evidenced by:*
  - o *Collaborations that include a diverse spectrum of community stakeholders;*
  - o *A broad base of financial support, including local financial and in-kind contributions; and*
  - o *Supporters who represent a wide range of community stakeholders.*

B. ABILITY TO PROVIDE FISCAL OVERSIGHT

Entities eligible to apply for SIF grants include:
- *Existing grantmaking institutions, or*
- *Partnerships between an existing grantmaking institution and another grantmaking institution, a State Commission, or the chief executive officer of a unit of general local government*

i.   *Existing grantmaking institutions are organizations in existence at the time of the application where, investing in nonprofit community organizations or programs is an essential (rather than collateral) means of fulfilling their mission and vision. In keeping with this view, grantmaking institutions will generally have the following as part of their core operating functions:*
- *Conducting open or otherwise competitive programs to award grants to or make investments in a diverse portfolio of nonprofit community organizations;*
- *Negotiating specific grant requirements with nonprofit community organizations; and*
- *Overseeing and monitoring the performance of grantees.*

ii.   *In evaluating your organization's ability to provide fiscal oversight, the Corporation will take into account its review of your organization's capacity. The Corporation will further consider:*
- *The extent to which your organization, or proposed partnership, has key personnel with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience to provide fiscal oversight of subgrantees; and*

- *Whether your organization, or proposed partnership, has specific experience in providing fiscal oversight of subgrantees of Federal funds.*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

The applicant has the program and fiscal infrastructure to provide good oversight. Some Board members are leaders in the field of providing technical assistance and are providing oversight and insight.

Significant Strengths

(+) The applicant uses a very intensive, involved oversight approach for both program and fiscal areas. It sees the relationships as those of an investor, fills a seat on subgrantee Boards with a representative, is in weekly contact with subgrantees, and through its network helps subgrantees to develop partnerships and alliances and to secure additional funding. *(pg 4, 10, 39-33) (Organizational Capacity A. i.ii.,B.i.)*

(+) The applicant focuses closely on program oversight, as evidenced by VPP's monitoring process: (1) annual review of the grantee's performance to mutually agreed-upon milestones; (2) quarterly narratives documenting progress toward achievements; (3) annual conveyance letters to board and executive leadership highlighting accomplishments, challenges, and focus areas for next year; and (4) assessment and improvement indicators that rate the grantee's capacity in 13 specific categories. (pg 15, 21) *(Organizational Capacity A.ii)*

(+) VPP uses its Board of Directors and the connections of the Board members to technical assistance providers such as McKinsey and Monitor Associates for business planning, as well as Mathematica and Policy Studies Associates in the area of evaluation, in order to provide oversight and technical assistance. VPP has also recruited leaders at the board level and for senior management positions such as the COO for the organizations it supports. (pg 27, 29) *(Organizational Capacity A i..ii)*

(+) The applicant has a commitment to and process for self-assessment and continuous improvement. For example, it will create an oversight committee comprised of select members of the Boards of VPP and the subgrantees. VPP will report established metrics to the committee annually. *(pg 29, 30) (Organizational Capacity A.i.)*

(+) VPP has contracted with a third-party evaluator to conduct two separate and extensive perception studies, which provide VPP with critical insight on the effectiveness of its approach and partnerships. (A.i.). *(pg 11, 15, 20) (Organizational Capacity A.i.)*

Significant Weaknesses

(-) The applicant has not previously conducted a competitive process to select grantees, which may hinder either the recruitment process for a competitive subgranting process or limit the fit between subgrantees and the applicant's way of grantmaking. *(Organizational Capacity B.ii.)*

Select a Rating for ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☐ **Excellent**   ☒ **Strong**   ☐ **Satisfactory**   ☐**Weak/Non-responsive**

COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (20%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA states** that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

A. BUDGET AND PROGRAM DESIGN

In evaluating the cost effectiveness and budget adequacy of your proposed program, the Corporation will consider:

i.   *Whether your program is cost-effective based on:*
  * *The extent to which your program demonstrates diverse, non-Federal resources for program implementation and sustainability;*
  * *The extent to which you are proposing to provide more than the minimum required share of the costs of your program; and*
  * *Whether the reasonable and necessary costs of your program or project are higher because you are proposing to serve areas that are significantly philanthropically underserved.*

ii.   *Whether your budget is adequate to support your program design.*

B. MATCH SOURCES

i.   *At the time of submission of the application, applicants must demonstrate either cash-on-hand or commitments (or a combination thereof) toward meeting 50 percent their first year matching funds, based on the amount of Federal grant funds applied for.*

ii.   *In addition to the match eligibility criteria, the Corporation will evaluate the extent to which you have a combination of cash-on-hand or commitments to meet the full match requirements, and whether your organization will be able to provide financial resources for your SIF program beyond the minimum required match.*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY as follows:

  * **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
  * **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
  * **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

The applicant has excellent ties to the business and philanthropic community enabling it to raise large pools of money. The panel was concerned that their personnel costs were unusually high.

Significant Strengths

(+) The applicant has raised $38 million of which $10 million will be dedicated to this program. The money comes from diverse non Federal funders. *(pg 13, 22)* The applicant will help subgrantees source dollars for matching and has already begun outreach. *(pg 20, 21, 39) (Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy B.ii.)*

(+) The applicant has clearly demonstrated an ability to raise non-traditional philanthropic monies. For its first fund, VPP raised $31 million from 29 founding individual investors and three institutional investors: the Morino Institute, the Surdna Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. *(pg 21, 33) (Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy B.i.)*

Significant Weaknesses

The panel did not find a significant weakness.

Select a Rating for COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☐ Excellent	☒ Strong	☐ Satisfactory	☐Weak/Non-responsive

OVERALL APPRAISAL

I. **Provide a 3 - 5 sentence Overall Appraisal Statement of the application taking into consideration:**

- The Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, and Ratings from each category; and
- The weighting of each category (Program Design (45%), Organizational Capacity (35%), Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (20%)).

The applicant's approach is good – providing a continuum of support to a vulnerable population, low-income youth in the Washington, DC area, helping them prepare for and complete college and become employed, healthy, and engaged citizens. The applicant seems to understand how to wring out efficiency from a team approach. The applicant describes good fiscal oversight. The applicant also describes strong evaluation plans, including experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation of all subgrantee projects. However, the panel was concerned that goals were not clearly defined and preselected grantees were not chosen in an open and competitive manner. While the applicant's programming approach has merit, it didn't impress the panel as particularly compelling and transformative. As a result, the panel felt the applicant was better suited to relying on its own substantial fundraising abilities.

II. Select one Band for this application (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")
Ensure that your selection is supported by your panel's Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, Ratings, and Overall Appraisal Statement. Take into consideration the weighting of each category.

☐ **Band I (Excellent):** A comprehensive and thorough application of excellent merit with very significant strengths and no/minimal significant weaknesses.

☒ **Band II (Strong):** An application that demonstrates overall competence and is worthy of support, where the value of the significant strengths outweigh the identified weaknesses.

☐ **Band III (Satisfactory):** An application with potential, where strengths and weaknesses are approximately equal. However, some fundamental weaknesses have been identified.

☐ **Band IV (Weak/Non-Responsive):** An application with very significant weaknesses and no/minimal significant strengths that have been identified. This option may also include an application that is non-responsive to the published criteria.

Rank

As a panel, Rank this application in relation to the other applications on your panel. Complete this section <u>only</u> after all applications before your panel have been reviewed and consensus has been achieved on each one. The highest rank is "1".

Rank: __5__ of __7__ total applications on Panel # _4___ .

CONSENSUS RUBRIC

Please use this Consensus Rubric as guidance when selecting your Ratings or Bands.

BAND I (Excellent) — *A BAND I rating reflects that the application is compelling, consistently excellent in quality, and addresses all requirements; thereby showing the highest potential for success.*

The **Excellent** application consistently:
- ✓ Goes beyond what was requested, showing that the applicant has anticipated issues that may arise.
- ✓ Provides a thorough, detailed response to all of the information requested.
- ✓ Provides a clear and highly compelling description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Provides clear evidence to support all objectives of this section (no assumptions are made).
- ✓ Supports ideas and objectives with comprehensive plans explaining and connecting ideas to objectives.

BAND II (Strong) — *A BAND II rating reflects that the application is solid, good-quality, and has great potential for success.*

The **Strong** application:
- ✓ Provides a response to all of the information requested.
- ✓ Provides a realistic description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Explains most assumptions and reasons.
- ✓ Supports ideas with comprehensive plans, examples, or outlines.

BAND III (Satisfactory) — *A BAND III rating reflects that the application generally meets requirements for a reasonable chance of success, but is neither especially strong nor especially weak.*

The **Satisfactory** application:
- ✓ Covers most of the information requested, with a few exceptions.
- ✓ Is sometimes unclear how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Makes some assumptions and leaves some reasons unexplained.
- ✓ Supports individual ideas with plans, examples, or outline.

BAND IV (Weak/Non-responsive) — *A weak/non-responsive rating reflects that the application is below standard especially in ability, skill, or quality; indicating that this application will most likely not succeed as described or is not responsive to the application requirements.*

The **Weak/Non-responsive** application:
- ✓ Does not provide one or more key pieces of requested information.
- ✓ Gives an unclear description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Gives many unsupported assumptions and reasons with little or no connection to objectives.
- ✓ Tends to "parrot" back the question, rather than answer and explain it
- ✓ Makes many assumptions and many reasons are not defined.

✓ Did not connect the activities to the anticipated results.

✓ Does not address or respond to the requirements/conditions of the NOFA.

✓ Proposes activities that are not consistent with the NOFA and application instructions.

2010 Social Innovation Fund

Venture Philanthropy Partners

Section 2 – Reviewer Comments: Group 2

SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND 2010

PANEL CONSENSUS FORM

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Category	Percentage	Subcategories
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		B. Use of Evidence
		C. Community Resources
		D. Description of Activities i. Subgranting ii. Technical Assistance and Support
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		B. Ability to Provide Fiscal Oversight
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	20%	A. Budget and Program Design
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Please complete the following steps:

1. For each of the 3 categories (Program Design; Organizational Capacity; Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy), the LR should:
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    b. **List the application's significant strengths and weaknesses and annotate each.** Each significant strength or weakness **must** be supported by **at least one** of the Eligibility or Application Review Criteria that were in the SIF NOFA. (examples are included in this form)
    c. **Taking into consideration** both the Narrative Assessment and the listed strengths and weaknesses, **select a Rating** by checking the appropriate box.

2. **Complete the Overall Appraisal section.** In this section, you will:
    a. Provide an Overall Appraisal Statement; and
    b. Select a consensus Band that represents the quality of the application as a whole. The Bands are described in the Overall Appraisal section at the end of this form, and Appendix D of the Review Guide.

3. **After the panel has discussed all applications, provide a Rank for each application.**

PROGRAM DESIGN (45%)

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i.   ***Geographically-Based SIF***
       To apply as a geographically-based SIF, the applicant must propose to focus on serving low-income communities within a specific local geographic area, <u>and</u> propose to focus on improving measurable outcomes related to <u>one or more</u> of the following priority issue areas:
       - ***Economic Opportunity*** *– Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals;*
       - ***Youth Development and School Support*** *– Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives;*
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       The application must provide 1) statistics on the needs related to the issue area(s) within the specific local geographic area, and 2) information on the specific measurable outcomes related to those issue areas that the applicant will seek to improve.

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       To apply as an issue-based SIF, the application must propose to focus on addressing one of the following priority issue areas within multiple low-income communities:
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       - ***Healthy Futures*** *– Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness.*

       The application must provide 1) statistics on the needs related to the issue area within the geographic areas likely to be served, including statistics demonstrating that those geographic areas have a high need in the priority issue area, and 2) information on the specific measurable outcomes related to the priority issue area that the applicant will seek to improve.

B. USE OF EVIDENCE

i. *Applicants must include in their application information describing their track record of using rigorous evidence, data, and evaluation tools to:*
- *Select and invest in subgrantees;*
- *Support and monitor the replication and expansion of subgrantees; and*
- *Achieve measurable outcomes.*

C. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Not applicable. The applicant's Community Resources should be assessed in the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy section. Applicants were instructed **not** to provide information in this section. If applicants include information in this section, it should not be considered in your overall rating for the Program Design section.

D. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

i. **Subgranting**
a. *Applicants must describe the process by which they will competitively select their nonprofit community organization subgrantees, and, if applicable, the process by which they have pre-selected some subgrantees. Specifically, applicants must describe how their competitive subgrant selection process will ensure a portfolio of subgrantees that are innovative nonprofit community organizations serving low-income communities and that possess:*
- *A strong theory of change;*
- *Strong leadership and financial and management systems, including data management;*
- *A strong financial position, including funding diversity, the ability to meet the requirements for providing dollar-for-dollar matching funds, and the ability to sustain the initiative after the subgrant period concludes;*
- *Strong community relationships;*
- *A commitment to and track record of using data and evaluation for performance and program improvement;*
- *Evidence of effectiveness, including a demonstrated track record of achieving specific measurable outcomes related to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary;*
- *Strong potential for replication or expansion;*
- *A well-defined plan for achieving specific measurable outcomes connected to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary, evaluation of program effectiveness, performance improvement, and replication or expansion; and*
- *A commitment to use grant funds to replicate, expand, or support their programs.*

Either as part of its review of the applications or in clarification reviews prior to award, the Corporation may request additional information regarding pre-selected subgrantees for compliance and appropriate outcomes.

ii. **Technical Assistance and Support**
a. *Applicants must include in their application information describing how they will provide technical assistance and support (other than financial support) that will increase the ability of subgrantees to achieve their measurable outcomes, including replication or expansion. Replication or expansion may happen in various ways (including, for example, creating new sites*

or affiliating with another program to replicate an intervention) and in multiple contexts (including, for example, serving more people in a current geography or growing to new geographies).

Provide a panel assessment of the application's PROGRAM DESIGN as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

Venture Philanthropy Partners (VPP) is a philanthropic investment organization whose mission is to help identify and develop strong leaders who can build strong, high-performing nonprofit institutions. VPP has a track record of working with nonprofits and funders within the National Capital Region (NCR) to develop in depth competencies around strategic action and strategic investing. The applicant proposes a Geographically-based SIF focusing on Youth Development and School Support. The proposal describes a compelling rational for how and why VPP will focus grant funds, their own funds, expertise, and personal contacts to strengthen four pre-selected grantees and up to four additional grantees selected through a competitive process.

The four pre-selected subgrantees are organizations that VPP has prior and/ or current organizational capacity building relationships. These include College Summit-NCR, LAYC, KIPP DC, and YEAR UP and were chosen because of their growing ability to achieve results with youth and because of their ability to serve as the beginning building blocks in a continuum of services youth within the region. The other subgrantees will be chosen based on "gaps" within the proposed continuum and will be selected on their potential capacity to improve the lives of children and youth of low-income families in the NCR.

The panel felt the proposal could have been stronger if VPP had offered additional statistical data regarding the need for the proposed "continuum of services for youth" within the NCR. In addition, VPP does not appear to have experience with the kind of competitive grant processes required by SIF. This weakness was addressed through requesting funds to hire a consultant to help construct and implement an effective bidding process.

Overall, VPP has over a decade of evidence-based experience and a strong capability to raise, oversee, and sustain the financial commitments put forth in this RFP. The panel believes VPP's proposal offers a well thought out process that will yield a continuum of services to meet the needs of youth in a growing partnership with the area's nonprofits.

Significant Strengths

Application reflects VPP's depth of experience (since 2000) in creating, using, collecting, and analyzing organizational performance data. The data serve to ground the applicant's capacity-building strategies in ways that can be measured both for monitoring and on-going performance improvement purposes.

To help strengthen the subgrantees, Child Trends (the nation's only nonprofit, nonpartisan research and policy center that studies children at all stages of development) has committed to a new partnership with VPP. Child Trends has committed nationally recognized evaluation experts (Kris Moore and Karen Walker) to the project and its large Child Trends DataBank (a public one-stop source for the latest national trends and research on children and youth). Child Trends has already provided an initial analysis of the outcome measures used by four preselected subgrantees and has identified common measures of success for education and employment youth programs that can be used by all subgrantees. Child Trends will serve as the evaluation advisor and consultant to the project. *(Program Design B. i.)*

Applicant describes well their disciplined process tools for incorporating and achieving specific measurable outcomes among their subgrantees. One of these tools is VPP's Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool McKinsey; an assessment tool to measure operational capacity and identify areas which need improvement. As of 2009, more than 90 organizations have requested permission to use the tool. *(Program Design D i. a.)*

VPP describes how they will provide technical assistance and support (including financial support) that will increase the ability of subgrantees to achieve their measurable outcomes, including replication or expansion. VPP has a growing knowledge base of the experience, achievements, and lessons learned from a strong internal environment of continual improvement, from other nonprofit partners, and from investors. These "best practices" have been systematically captured and the proposal offers to use this body of knowledge to develop the same capacities in additional not-for-profits in the NCR. This knowledge base represents a growing, important asset to be shared with the field for broader impact beyond their investment partners. *(Program Design D. ii. a.)*

The applicant underscores that its investments in helping to build its subgrantees' capacity to deliver evidence-based, high-performance, youth-focused nonprofits are long-term and multi-year. The VPP Board's commitment of $10 million over five years exemplifies this. VPP proposes to build a shared outcome framework that will allow for lessons learned to be shared and incorporated by all subgrantees. *(Program Design D. i. and D. ii.)*

Significant Weaknesses

While the methodology for estimating the target population of poor young adults in the National Capital Region (NCR) suggests a sophisticated approach, no additional statistics about the need for these activities is provided. *(Program Design A. i.)*

The applicant has no experience with a competitive grant process. VPP describes an in-depth vetting and planning process for former grantees, including the identified subgrantees, yet suggests that a similar two stage process can be implemented in 6 months. The expectations of the successful competitors suggest they are already extraordinary, strong non-profit organizations. *(Program Design, D. i.)*

Select a Rating for PROGRAM DESIGN (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

    ☒ **Excellent**　　　　☐ **Strong**　　　　☐ **Satisfactory**　　　　☐**Weak/Non-responsive**

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (35%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA states** that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Organizational Capacity.

A. ABILITY TO PROVIDE PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

In evaluating your organization's ability to provide program oversight, the Corporation will consider:

i. *The extent to which your organization has a sound structure including:*
    * *The ability to provide sound programmatic oversight, including:*
        o *Experience with and capacity for evaluation; and*
        o *Experience with and capacity for supporting replication or expansion.*
    * *Well-defined roles for your Board of directors, administrators, and staff;*
    * *A well-designed plan and systems for organizational (as opposed to subgrantee) self-assessment and continuous improvement; and*
    * *The ability to provide and/or secure effective technical assistance.*

ii. *Whether your organization has a sound record of accomplishment, including the extent to which you:*
    * *Have a track record of supporting organizations that demonstrate evidence of impact;*
    * *Demonstrate leadership within the organization and strong relationships within the communities served;*
    * *Have a track-record of raising substantial resources, and, if you are an existing Federal grantee, having secured the matching resources as required in your prior grant awards; and*
    * *The extent to which your community support recurs, increases in scope or amount, and is more diverse, as evidenced by:*
        o *Collaborations that include a diverse spectrum of community stakeholders;*
        o *A broad base of financial support, including local financial and in-kind contributions; and*
        o *Supporters who represent a wide range of community stakeholders.*

B. ABILITY TO PROVIDE FISCAL OVERSIGHT

Entities eligible to apply for SIF grants include:
    * *Existing grantmaking institutions, or*
    * *Partnerships between an existing grantmaking institution and another grantmaking institution, a State Commission, or the chief executive officer of a unit of general local government*

i. *Existing grantmaking institutions are organizations in existence at the time of the application where, investing in nonprofit community organizations or programs is an essential (rather than collateral) means of fulfilling their mission and vision. In keeping with this view, grantmaking institutions will generally have the following as part of their core operating functions:*
    * *Conducting open or otherwise competitive programs to award grants to or make investments in a diverse portfolio of nonprofit community organizations;*

- *Negotiating specific grant requirements with nonprofit community organizations; and*
- *Overseeing and monitoring the performance of grantees.*

ii. *In evaluating your organization's ability to provide fiscal oversight, the Corporation will take into account its review of your organization's capacity. The Corporation will further consider:*
   - *The extent to which your organization, or proposed partnership, has key personnel with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience to provide fiscal oversight of subgrantees; and*
   - *Whether your organization, or proposed partnership, has specific experience in providing fiscal oversight of subgrantees of Federal funds.*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

Both VPP and Child Trends have strong histories functioning in comparable intermediary roles with sound records of internal controls and noted accomplishments. Evidence and accountability are clearly valued within their organizations and is mirrored in the proposed theories of change to be used with subgrantees. Both organizations have a highly-visible commitment to meaningful data collection and analysis to guide organizational growth and program improvement.

Significant Strengths

Research from the field of venture capital suggests that, when applied to the nonprofit sector, intermediaries should balance strengthening the internal operations of an organization with efficient program implementation. VPP internally models and can help subgrantees achieve this crucial balance. *(Org Capacity A.i.)*

VPP has a well-designed plan and systems for internal organizational self-assessment and continuous improvement. The board and staff have a concrete track record of raising significant funding, including over $67 million for its investment portfolios since 2000. *(Org Capacity A.i.)*

The applicant describes appropriate systems and expertise to ensure effective programmatic and fiscal accountability. The initiative will create an oversight committee comprised of select members of the Boards of VPP and the subgrantees. VPP will report agreed upon and established metrics to appropriate subcommittees bi-monthly and to all oversight committees annually. In addition, VPP staff will conduct monthly site visits of all subgrantees and hold weekly check-in meetings with them, ensuring the oversight entities are kept abreast of progress and/or problems. *(Org Capacity B. i. and B. ii.)*

Over the past ten years, VPP has expanded from its original network of 12 regional nonprofits to now 21 independent sites, serving over 37 new neighborhoods. Its original funding base of $30 million was

matched by $33.9 million in support from other sources - more than a dollar for dollar growth in funds available to fuel investment in nonprofit capacity building work. *(Org Capacity A. ii)*

Significant Weaknesses

None noted.

Select a Rating for ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

⊠ **Excellent**   ☐ **Strong**   ☐ **Satisfactory**   ☐**Weak/Non-responsive**

COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (20%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA states** that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

A. BUDGET AND PROGRAM DESIGN

In evaluating the cost effectiveness and budget adequacy of your proposed program, the Corporation will consider:

i.   *Whether your program is cost-effective based on:*
   - *The extent to which your program demonstrates diverse, non-Federal resources for program implementation and sustainability;*
   - *The extent to which you are proposing to provide more than the minimum required share of the costs of your program; and*
   - *Whether the reasonable and necessary costs of your program or project are higher because you are proposing to serve areas that are significantly philanthropically underserved.*

ii.   *Whether your budget is adequate to support your program design.*

B. MATCH SOURCES

i.   *At the time of submission of the application, applicants must demonstrate either cash-on-hand or commitments (or a combination thereof) toward meeting 50 percent their first year matching funds, based on the amount of Federal grant funds applied for.*

ii.   *In addition to the match eligibility criteria, the Corporation will evaluate the extent to which you have a combination of cash-on-hand or commitments to meet the full match requirements, and whether your organization will be able to provide financial resources for your SIF program beyond the minimum required match.*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY as follows:

   - **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**

- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

The proposal offers a clear explanation of how VPP and its partnering organization Child Trends will fulfill the financial and programmatic obligations set forth in the RFP. That includes required self-awareness, an efficient use of resources, and an effective decision-making capability. The financial functions, embodied by the capabilities of the applicants' key staff and board members, reflect critical analytical capabilities and the ability to understand subgrantees financial situations, nonprofit programmatic structure, and community-focused missions. They are capable of and experienced at contributing to nonprofits capacities by teaching them to become organizational strategists, being architects of successful operational plans, and generating new ideas which contribute to growth. The application offers the expertise of VPP and Child Trends to help other nonprofits become long-term thinkers who can make important financial and programmatic decisions with sufficient information and analysis while staying keenly focused on the needs of America's youth.

Significant Strengths

VPP has an annual budget for year one of $4 million, with $2 million from SIF and $2 million from VPP's private investors, foundation, and corporate donors. VPP has $21 million in short term, liquid assets held at JP Morgan, reflecting the ability to meet its obligation to the initiative. Of the $4 million for year one, $3.2 (80%) will go to the subgrantees. *(Budget A. i.)*

Based on extensive experience, the applicant provides detailed costs for organizational capacity, networking among subgrantees, and evaluation. Specifically, VPP's budget includes $50,000 annually to support learning networking activities; $47,506 for the competitive bidding process, including baseline data collection and analysis; and $119,000 for Child Trends to collect, monitor, and evaluate subgrantee performance. The applicant states that each pre-selected subgrantee has prepared budgets related to this project which includes all program costs. *(Budget A. i.)*

All aspects of the budget are well supported and seem adequate and reasonable. *(Budget A. i.)*

Significant Weaknesses

None noted

Select a Rating for COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☒ **Excellent**   ☐ **Strong**   ☐ **Satisfactory**   ☐ **Weak/Non-responsive**

OVERALL APPRAISAL

I. Provide a 3 - 5 sentence Overall Appraisal Statement of the application taking into consideration:

The applicant proposes a geographically-based SIF focusing on Youth Development and School Support within the National Capital region (NCR). VPP describes in-depth how they will focus grant funds, their own funds, expertise, and personal contacts to strengthen four pre-selected grantees and up to four additional grantees selected through a well thought out competitive process. A well thought through strategy was used in identifying the four preselected subgrantees and adequate resources and expertise have been designed to select up to four more. The capacity of subgrantees will be built through VPP's use of well-established processes, tools, and quality networks of information sharing. A national research organization, Child Trends, will partner to ensure the collection, analysis, and use of evaluative data for the subgrantees' ongoing performance improvement. VPP has a successful 10 year history of functioning in a comparable intermediary role with a sound record of internal controls and noted accomplishments in helping nonprofits build and sustain organizational strength. VPP is strong financially and has adequately addressed how it will meet its financial and oversight obligations.

II. Select one Band for this application (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")
Ensure that your selection is supported by your panel's Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, Ratings, and Overall Appraisal Statement. Take into consideration the weighting of each category.

☒ **Band I (Excellent):** A comprehensive and thorough application of excellent merit with very significant strengths and no/minimal significant weaknesses.

☐ **Band II (Strong):** An application that demonstrates overall competence and is worthy of support, where the value of the significant strengths outweigh the identified weaknesses.

☐ **Band III (Satisfactory):** An application with potential, where strengths and weaknesses are approximately equal. However, some fundamental weaknesses have been identified.

☐ **Band IV (Weak/Non-Responsive):** An application with very significant weaknesses and no/minimal significant strengths that have been identified. This option may also include an application that is non-responsive to the published criteria.

Rank

As a panel, **Rank this application in relation to the other applications on your panel.** Complete this section only after all applications before your panel have been reviewed and consensus has been achieved on each one. The highest rank is "1".

Rank: __1__ of __6__ total applications on Panel # __15__.

CONSENSUS RUBRIC

Please use this Consensus Rubric as guidance when selecting your Ratings or Bands.

BAND I (Excellent) — *A BAND I rating reflects that the application is compelling, consistently excellent in quality, and addresses all requirements; thereby showing the highest potential for success.*

The **Excellent** application consistently:
✓ Goes beyond what was requested, showing that the applicant has anticipated issues that may arise.

✓ Provides a thorough, detailed response to all of the information requested.

✓ Provides a clear and highly compelling description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓ Provides clear evidence to support all objectives of this section (no assumptions are made).

✓ Supports ideas and objectives with comprehensive plans explaining and connecting ideas to objectives.

BAND II (Strong) — *A BAND II rating reflects that the application is solid, good-quality, and has great potential for success.*

The **Strong** application:
✓ Provides a response to all of the information requested.

✓ Provides a realistic description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓ Explains most assumptions and reasons.

✓ Supports ideas with comprehensive plans, examples, or outlines.

BAND III (Satisfactory) — *A BAND III rating reflects that the application generally meets requirements for a reasonable chance of success, but is neither especially strong nor especially weak.*

The **Satisfactory** application:
✓ Covers most of the information requested, with a few exceptions.

✓ Is sometimes unclear how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓ Makes some assumptions and leaves some reasons unexplained.

✓ Supports individual ideas with plans, examples, or outline.

BAND IV (Weak/Non-responsive) — *A weak/non-responsive rating reflects that the application is below standard especially in ability, skill, or quality; indicating that this application will most likely not succeed as described or is not responsive to the application requirements.*

The **Weak/Non-responsive** application:
✓ Does not provide one or more key pieces of requested information.

✓ Gives an unclear description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓ Gives many unsupported assumptions and reasons with little or no connection to objectives.

✓ Tends to "parrot" back the question, rather than answer and explain it

✓ Makes many assumptions and many reasons are not defined.

✓ Did not connect the activities to the anticipated results.

✓ Does not address or respond to the requirements/conditions of the NOFA.

✓ Proposes activities that are not consistent with the NOFA and application instructions.